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Letter dated 27 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our earlier letters to you concerning acts of piracy and provocation committed by the United States naval forces based in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region, I should like to inform you that such forces are continuing to engage in hostile action against vessels carrying civilian merchandise in Iraqi territorial waters and elsewhere. Intrusive patrols of the United States Navy, joined by Australian naval units, are intercepting these vessels and assaulting and questioning their crews. They sometimes detain ships and their crews for long periods of time, and they have in the past gone so far as to sink some of them. I present to you hereunder some examples of these practices.

1. On 28 June 2002, two Australian military craft with 20 armed men on board assaulted the Iraqi tender *Al-Fida'* as it was proceeding from Umm Qasr to Mina' al-Ma`qil, two Iraqi ports. The personnel forcibly boarded the tender and seized the crewmen. They searched the vessel, broke the locks on its holds and diverted it from its course a distance of six nautical miles out to sea to a point off Al-Mina' al-Amiq. The tender was thoroughly searched, and they asked for its name and its port of departure. An Australian frigate bearing the hull number 02 was following the tender. The tender subsequently returned to Mina' al-Ma`qil on 30 June 2002.

2. On 7 July 2002, two armed American craft from the United States frigate intercepted Iraq Ports Authority mechanical tender No. 1 at a point half a nautical mile before it would have reached the Khawr al-Amayah oil terminal to resupply it with fresh water. The United States personnel boarded the tender by force of arms, diverted it from its course towards the frigate and detained its crew. They subsequently released the tender and its crew, and it continued on its course towards the Khawr al-Amayah terminal.

3. On 8 July 2002 the same tender and the Iraqi tugboat *Al-Rayah* were subjected to an armed attack by two armed military craft belonging to the Australian frigate bearing the hull number 05 while the tender was supplying the tugboat with fresh water. They left the tender later the same day.

The presence of vessels of the United States Navy and units of the Australian fleet and their assaults on ships carrying civilian merchandise in the area are acts of aggression that endanger the movement of civilian shipping in the Arabian Gulf. They are incompatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international norms governing the safety of maritime navigation, and the United States of America and those assisting it must bear full

legal responsibility for them. Iraq affirms its right, in accordance with the principle of international responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage sustained by it or by its nationals as a result of the criminal acts being committed by these invading forces against ships in the Arabian Gulf region.

We urge you to intervene in order to prevent acts of aggression and terrorism by the United States that are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, public international law and international humanitarian law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Al-Douri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative